

Dangerous Mistakes a Christian Makes, Part 4 - Acts 25:16-22 - April 25th, 2010

- This is part four of a study titled "Dangerous Mistakes a Christian Makes," as we examine the life of the Apostle Paul here in the Acts.
- Let me hasten to say that we're not examining Paul's mistakes; rather we're studying how he avoids dangerous and deadly mistakes.
- We pick it up in verse 16 where we see not the sixth mistake that Paul avoids making. In addition, we'll even see how he's able to do it.

6. We won't defend the faith against the world (Verse 16)

16 "I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over any man before he has faced his accusers and has had an opportunity to defend himself against their charges.

- v16 Festus says he told the Jews it wasn't customary to hand him over to his accusers until he had an opportunity to defend himself.
- What's so interesting about this is that Paul had already faced his accusers and made his defense vis-à-vis his defending of the faith.
- There are two components to this that I believe we would be grossly remiss, were we to not see them in what's really going on here.
- First, Paul is not worried about how he will defend himself or what he will say, because he knows the Holy Spirit will give him the words.

Luke 12:11-12 11 "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say." NIV

Luke 21:12-16 12 "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. 13 This will result in your being witnesses to them. 14 But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. 15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. NIV

- The second component to this is that woven into the fabric of the Apostle's defense; he's both defending and contending for the faith.
- In his defense of defending the faith, we find the best offense in contending for the faith. Paul isn't defensive, he's on the offensive.

Jude 3-4 3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. NIV

7. We can't see God's providence in the world (Verses 17-22)

17 When they came here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in. 18 When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. 19 Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. 20 I was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges. 21 When Paul made his appeal to be held over for the Emperor's decision, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar." 22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself." He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him."

- v17-18 Festus then tells Agrippa how he didn't delay Paul's case and that the charges against him were not criminal as he expected.
- v19-20 He says it was a religious dispute over a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. He's at a loss about what to do.
- v21-22 Festus goes on to tell Agrippa that he held Paul until he could send him to Caesar, then Agrippa asks to hear Paul for himself.

- I suggest to you that the fingerprints of God's divine providence and God's divine delays are all over this hearing and Paul knows it.
- Here's why; conspicuously absent from the text is any record of disenchantment on Paul's part while unjustly imprisoned for two years.
- Paul knows God is orchestrating and even choreographing every step in his circumstances. Paul is on to what God is up to for him.
- As we'll see next week, the next day King Agrippa and hundreds with him will hear what Paul has to say about this Jesus being alive.
- Dare I say that this is a mistake you and I make every day; we see not the providence or presence of God but only the hand of man.

2 Kings 6:8-17 8 Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, "I will set up my camp in such and such a place." 9 The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: "Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there." 10 So the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places. 11 This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Will you not tell me which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?" 12 "None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom." 13 "Go, find out where he is," the king ordered, "so I can send men and capture him." The report came back: "He is in Dothan." 14 Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. 15 When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. 16 "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. NIV